

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
 NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

515 KM²

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2023

129.7 KM²

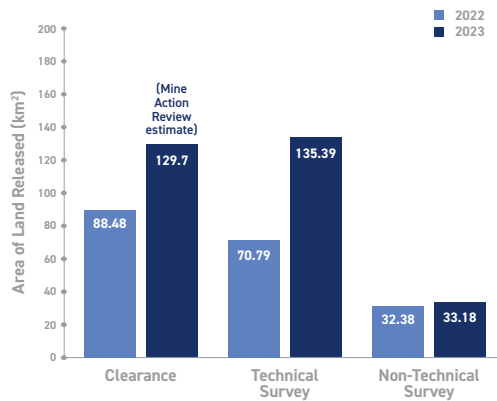
(MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE)

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2023

19,229

(BASED ON CMAA DATA AND INCLUDING 2,056 DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cambodia reported increased land release through survey and clearance by nearly 90% to 362km² in 2023, according to data provided by the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). Despite the significant progress achieved, Cambodia acknowledged in 2024 it would be unable to complete clearance by its latest Article 5 deadline and would request an extension. Official data credited Cambodia's military with a big share of clearance but without releasing sufficient details of the capacities deployed. Mine Action Review has, therefore, estimated a

lower total for clearance, due to concerns about the feasibility of the reported military clearance data. Furthermore, Cambodia did not agree to Thai requests for clearance of tasks in disputed areas of their common border putting a spotlight on the Cambodian military's apparent resistance and raising concerns about Cambodia's implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). Cambodia became the first mine action programme to introduce a national standard on mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Cambodia has reduced its estimate of mine contamination by hundreds of square kilometres through cancellation, reduction, and clearance despite continuing to discover huge swathes of previously unidentified hazardous area. In 2019, Cambodia requested a second extension of its Article 5 clearance deadline and despite mobilising funds and sharply raising productivity in a push to meet its end-2025 deadline, in 2024 it acknowledged that the scale of the remaining problem would require a third extension.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cambodia should step up engagement with Thailand at political, diplomatic, and military levels to conclude agreement on clearing mined areas on their joint border.

- Cambodia's next Article 5 deadline extension request should be elaborated in collaboration with clearance operators and other implementing partners, and should lay out clear policy, priorities, and timelines for mine clearance, including clearance of the border with Thailand.
- Cambodia should reconsider the military's restrictions on access to border minefields within 7km of the border by international demining organisations.
- Cambodia should clarify, and include in its next Article 5 extension request, the government's annual funding for survey and clearance through to completion of its Article 5 obligations.
- Cambodia should seek to enhance quality management of both land release operations and of the resulting land release data, covering clearance operations conducted by all entities, including international and national clearance operators, and the military.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia's estimate of contamination fell to 435km ² at the end of 2023, 36% lower than a year earlier, and it declared eight of its 25 provinces mine free, but it also continued to identify large areas of previously unreported mine contamination and calculated new survey would add another 179km ² . Cambodia does not disaggregate confirmed hazardous areas and suspected hazardous areas in line with international best practice.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	The government allocated US\$30 million to mine action in 2023 enabling deployment of substantial numbers of army deminers, but the model appears to be unsustainable as an expected follow-up allocation of \$30 million did not materialise for 2024. The CMAA continued to convene regular meetings of a Technical Working Group on Mine Action which brings stakeholders together, as well as a Mine Action Coordination Committee and eight Technical Reference Groups, including one on survey and clearance.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	9	8	Cambodia became the first country to introduce a national standard on mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action. The new Cambodian National Mine Action Standard (CMAS) reinforces a Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan that has undergone three updates. Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in Mine Action were also finalised and disseminated in 2023, and a monitoring tool developed for CMAA to monitor operators' adherence to these guidelines. The percentage of women employed by operators is inching up but varies from around 20% in the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) to 50% in Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	6	Not Scored	Cambodia has a national standard on environmental management although implementation is not strictly monitored. Operators also follow internal standing operating procedures (SOPs). Mines Advisory Group (MAG) rolled out Global Technical Standards that included a chapter on environmental management and The HALO Trust continued to adopt measures to mitigate the impact of operations such as more use of renewable energy. NPA rolled out a "Green Field Tool" in 2024, requiring environmental impact assessments of all survey and clearance tasks.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Strengthening information management is one of the goals of Cambodia's national mine action strategy and the CMAA has continued to make improvements in recent years. The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database has been upgraded from New Generation to Core, but in 2023 was still migrating data from the old system to the new. The sharp acceleration of survey and clearance in 2023 resulted occasionally in a backlog in reports waiting to be uploaded to IMSMA.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia has a National Mine Action Strategy 2018–25 and its 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request set out revised land release targets aiming to complete clearance by the end of 2025. Despite a sharp acceleration in land release in 2023, Cambodia acknowledged it would be unable to meet the deadline and said it would await the outcome of a new survey of the border to draw up a new plan of action.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia has national standards that are broadly compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and the CMAA is reviewing and developing standards in consultation with operators. In 2023, it added a new standard on mainstreaming gender in mine action and revised the standard for non-technical survey. To meet the rise in survey and clearance, the CMAA was seeking additional funding to enable quality management teams to dedicate more time to field inspections.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	9	8	Cambodia more than doubled the amount of land released through survey and clearance in 2022 and increased it by another 90% in 2023. Most of the land cleared was lightly contaminated while international demining organisations have not been allowed to work on Cambodia's border minefields, impeding clearance of the densest contamination. Cambodia did not agree to Thai requests for clearance of tasks in disputed areas of their common border putting a spotlight on the Cambodian military's apparent resistance and raising concerns about Cambodia's implementation of the APMBC.
Average Score	7.6	7.4	Overall Programme Performance: GOOD

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC)
- Cambodian Self-help Demining (CSHD)
- Royal Cambodian Army (RCA)
- National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces Management, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- APOPO
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Cambodia identified AP mined area of 435km² in 10 provinces at the end of 2023, more than one third less than the 681km² recorded at the end of 2022 and nearly 40% below the 716km² recorded in 22 provinces at the end of 2021.¹ At the end of 2023, its five most affected provinces accounted for 90% of the known remaining contamination (see Table 1 for details). Cambodia has previously estimated close to half the contamination, including its most densely mined areas, is within a 7km-wide belt along Cambodia's borders.² It projected a survey of border areas planned to be carried out in 2024 would identify an additional 79.9km² of mined area but acknowledged the figure could be higher.³

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2023)⁴

Province	No. of SHAs	Area (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	999	65,391,084
Battambang	947	88,806,660
Kampong Thom	2	306,058
Koh Kong	297	17,992,686
Oddar Meanchey	614	67,625,395
Pailin	233	11,510,222
Preah Vihear	606	108,384,799
Pursat	539	59,318,422
Ratanak Kiri	4	950,755
Siem Reap	89	14,778,004
Totals	4,330	435,064,085

SHA = Suspected hazardous area

1 Article 7 report (covering 2023), #4, based on data updated as of 29 March 2024.

2 Cambodia presentation to Intersessional Meeting, Geneva, 21 June 2022.

3 CMAA, Second Updated Work Plan of Cambodia, 30 April 2024.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), #4, based on data updated as of 29 March 2024.

The new contamination estimate attests to the acceleration in release of land under former Prime Minister Hun Sen's 2022 initiative to complete clearance of Cambodia's AP mined area by its end-2025 Article 5 deadline. Cambodia declared eight provinces mine-free in 2023,⁵ bringing the total number of provinces declared mine free in the last two years to fourteen.⁶ In 2024, the CMAA expected to add another four provinces to the mine-free list: Kratie, Kampong Thom, Ratanak Kiri, and Siem Reap.⁷

Despite the rapid pace of land release, Cambodia remains uncertain about the full extent of its mine contamination. The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) added 583 areas of previously unrecorded AP mine contamination covering close to 100km² to the database in 2023. This included 48km² in Pursat province and more than 22km² in Battambang and Siem Reap, both of which have

been a focus of mine action for three decades.⁸ Cambodia told the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in November 2023 that it expected survey to add a further 179km² to the clearance task and informed the 2024 intersessional meetings that it would need to release a total of 515km².⁹

There is particular uncertainty about what remains along Cambodia's 800km-long border with Thailand. Large parts have not been surveyed due to security issues and the difficulty of the terrain, and in areas that were surveyed casualties are occurring outside recorded polygons.¹⁰ Since 2020, Cambodia's military has prevented international NGOs from working within a 7km-wide belt along Cambodia's borders, slowing the progress of survey and clearance. Scattered/nuisance mines accounted for about 58% of Cambodia's known AP mine contamination at the end of 2023 and dense contamination for about 20%,¹¹ but this also looks set to rise as a result of the border survey.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Cambodia's mine hazards are a legacy of 30 years of conflict that ended in 1998 concentrated in, but not limited to, 21 north-western districts along the border with Thailand, which have accounted for the large majority of mine casualties. The conflict also left significant contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW), including hundreds of square kilometres affected by unexploded submunitions dropped by the United States (US) during the Vietnam War (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024* report on Cambodia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The CMAA was established by royal decree in 2000 to regulate, monitor, and coordinate the mine action sector in Cambodia. The CMAA has Prime Minister Hun Manet as its President and Senior Minister, Ly Thuch, as first vice president. Its Secretary General, Ly Panharith, appointed in December 2022, manages CMAA's planning and operations.¹² The CMAA has noticeably strengthened in recent years, and its roles and responsibilities have become more clearly defined.¹³

The Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), established in 1992, had been responsible for regulating and coordinating the sector in addition to undertaking clearance. After 2000, however, CMAC relinquished its role as regulator and coordinator and concentrated on conducting demining, risk education, and training.¹⁴ CMAC, which conducts both humanitarian and commercial survey and clearance, is Cambodia's largest mine action operator.¹⁵

Since 2004, Cambodia has had Provincial Mine Action Committees (PMACs) and Mine Action Planning Units (MAPUs) in mine-impacted provinces tasked with establishing clearance priorities in consultation with affected communities to ensure that clearance addresses their housing, agricultural, and infrastructure needs.¹⁶ MAPUs meet regularly with all mine action operators to plan annual mine action activities.¹⁷ The MAPUs also engage with local communities to conduct post-clearance monitoring; the socio-economic data on use of cleared land is passed on to the CMAA. This data, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), produced 10 performance monitoring reports in 2023.¹⁸

The Cambodian government established a Technical Working Group on Mine Action (TWG-MA) as a consultative mechanism facilitating coordination between the government and implementing partners.¹⁹ It met in April 2023 with 123 participants from government ministries, the army

5 The eight provinces were Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kampot, Takeo, Svay Rieng, Kandal, Kampong Speu and Mondol Kiri.

6 Provinces declared mine-free in 2022 were Kep, Preah Sihanouk, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, and Tbung Khmum, together with Phnom Penh – a municipality.

7 Email from Hean Kimsin, Director, Social & Economic Policy Department, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

8 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), #4.

9 Statements of Cambodia, APMBC Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP), Geneva, 22 November 2023; and Intersessional Meeting, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

10 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

11 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

12 CMAA, "Legal framework and mandate", at: <http://bit.ly/2W7r3dJ>.

13 Interviews with Su Yeon Yang, Project Coordination Officer, and Tong Try, UNDP, 23 April 2019; and Rebecca Letven, Programme Manager, MAG, Phnom Penh, 25 April 2019.

14 CMAC, "20 Years' Achievement in Mine Action 1998-2018 and Path Ahead", 2018.

15 Interview with Heng Rattana, Director General, CMAC, Phnom Penh, 25 April 2019.

16 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Landmines and Land Rights in Cambodia", December 2010, pp. 9 and 13.

17 Email from Zlatko Vezilic, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 May 2020.

18 UNDP Briefing Paper, Post-Clearance Monitoring, undated but 2022; and email from Tong Try, UNDP, 29 August 2024.

19 CMAA, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 24; and email from Tong Try, National Mine Action Adviser, UNDP, 18 June 2019.

(RCA), international organisations, demining NGOs, and the business community to discuss further strengthening mine action management and a work plan for achieving Cambodia's end-2025 clearance deadline.²⁰ The CMAA also chairs a Mine Action Coordination Committee (MACC), which convened in March 2022 and April 2023 to discuss implementation strategies with the sector. To further strengthen coordination in the sector, the CMAA convenes eight technical reference groups, including on risk education, survey and clearance, gender mainstreaming, and quality management (performance management system), which have met regularly to address operational issues. A CMAA workshop in May discussed the proposed Cambodian Mine Action Standard (CMAS) on gender, while a meeting in June 2023 reviewed the CMAS on baseline survey and the TRG on risk education met in October.²¹

The mine action sector receives technical support from a range of international organisations. UNDP's Clearing for Results programme has supported Cambodian mine action since 2006, aiming to ensure that clearance supports development priorities. The programme, now in its fourth phase (1 April 2020 to 31 December 2025), focuses on releasing mined areas in the most affected provinces through Land Reclamation Non-Technical Survey (LR-NTS) and clearance, while also supporting victim assistance, risk education, and gender mainstreaming, and strengthening the CMAA's capacity to lead the sector and support the development of national sustainable capacity to address residual threats.²² UNDP and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) share the cost of the CMAA database unit.²³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The CMAA is implementing a Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan (GMMAP) in line with the objectives of the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 and in 2023 became the first country to introduce a national mine action standard supporting the mainstreaming of gender and diversity. The proposed standard still awaited final approval as of early September 2024, but the CMAA said it planned to launch it before the end of the year.

The CMAA established a Gender Mainstreaming Team (GMT) in 2019 to coordinate with the Technical Reference Group on Gender. The TRG-G, which last met in December 2023,²⁴ is composed of representatives from UNDP, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), MAPUs, operators, and organisations working in risk education and victim assistance.²⁵

The CMAA pursued two GMMAPs covering 2013–15 and 2018–22, and the latest version, covering 2021–25, was approved at the end of 2021 and launched by CMAA First Vice-President Ly Thuch in March 2022.²⁶ It proposes the implementation of GMMAP guidelines through monitoring and evaluation of the performance of MAPUs and operators; capacity building of CMAA gender teams, MAPUs, and operators, and collecting data on the mine action needs of women; and more inclusive participation in mine action, including through collecting sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADDD).²⁷

The GMMAP also called for a CMAS on gender and diversity, which the CMAA released in December 2023. HALO said its advocacy was pivotal in the adoption of the new gender mainstreaming standard and the inclusion of questions aimed at improving collection of disability data.²⁸ Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in Mine Action were also finalised and disseminated in 2023, and a monitoring tool developed for CMAA to monitor operators' adherence to these guidelines.²⁹

Women represented one quarter of the CMAA's 100 office employees at the end of 2023, up from 20% two years earlier, and 19% of the CMAA's 74 management staff.³⁰ But in MAPUs, women held only 11% of the positions.³¹ Among operators, CMAC, the biggest in terms of capacity, reportedly employed two women among 38 management staff (5%) and 204 women among its 1,072 field staff, a relatively low ratio of 19%.³² One third of APOPO's total staff of 99 were women. Nearly a quarter of Mines Advisory Group (MAG)'s 526 staff are female while women made up 41% of its 418 operations personnel. It conducted a staff capacity building needs assessment in 2023 and after a competitive recruitment process hired two Cambodian female staff for senior technical positions in the field.³³ NPA's management are predominantly male but women made up almost half its 50 operations staff.³⁴

20 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 18; and email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

21 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, Programme Manager, HALO, 8 July 2024; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

22 Emails from Tong Try, UNDP, 28 July 2021; and Naomi Konza, Project Coordination Specialist, UNDP, 18 April 2022; UNDP Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022.

23 Emails from Rune Dale-Andresen, Country Director, NPA, 26 September 2020; and Portia Stratton, NPA, 21 June 2021.

24 Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, UNDP, p. 19.

25 CMAA, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 22; and email from Tong Try, UNDP, 27 July 2021.

26 V. Dara, "CMAA lauds female deminers", *Phnom Penh Post*, 10 March 2022.

27 Mine Action Plan 2021–25, December 2021, pp. 6–7.

28 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024.

29 UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 15.

30 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

31 UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 14.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 11 April 2024.

34 Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 15 May 2024.

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2023

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operational staff	Women in operational positions
CMAA	100	25 (25%)	74	14 (19%)	57	4 (6%)
CMAC ³⁵	1,432	291 (20%)	38	2 (5%)	1,072	204 (16%)
APOPO	99	32 (32%)	5	1 (20%)	94	28 (30%)
HALO	1,206	494 (41%)	211	55 (26%)	789	402 (51%)
MAG	526	202 (38%)	62	14 (23%)	418	172 (41%)
NPA	68	35 (51%)	7	2 (29%)	50	24 (48%)
Totals	3,431	1,079 (31%)	397	88 (22%)	2,480	834 (34%)

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The CMAA issued a national standard, CMAS 20, on "Environmental Management in Mine Action" in 2022. This requires operators to minimise the adverse impact of their operations on the environment, identify steps necessary to mitigate harm, and ensure that land is left in a suitable condition for its intended use. Operators are required to take account of erosion or soil degradation; possible pollution of air, water, or soil; and damage to infrastructure, wildlife, and vegetation, while also dealing with litter, debris, and other waste as well as damage to heritage sites or objects.³⁶

Operators say respect of CMAS 20 is not stringently monitored and that they already apply their own environmental standard operating procedures (SOPs). The international NGO APOPO reviewed its environmental management SOPs in 2023 and by 2025 plans to adapt the syntropic farming practices it used in Tanzania to Cambodia.³⁷

The HALO Trust adopted new measures to mitigate the environmental impact of its operations such as use of solar-powered lamps and mobile solar-powered charging stations for its detectors so as to reduce dependence on non-renewable energy sources while also reviewing waste management practices.³⁸

MAG rolled out its Global Technical Standards in 2022, which included a chapter on environment that set out an International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)-compliant, minimum baseline for all programmes to update their SOPs.³⁹ NPA has supported the development of standards for environmental management, including protection of forestry and pollution controls, and in 2024 rolled out a "Green Field Tool" that included a requirement for environmental impact assessments of survey and clearance tasks. It was also in the process of developing SOPs on environmental management.⁴⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The CMAA's database unit (DBU), with a staff of 14, is responsible for collecting, storing, analysing, and disseminating data in support of planning and prioritisation.⁴¹ The DBU previously used the Information Management System for Mine Action New Generation (IMSMA NG) but has now installed IMSMA Core and in 2023 was migrating

data across to the new platform.⁴² The database unit retains IMSMA NG as a platform to receive data from CMAC before transferring it to Core. CMAC and RCA report in hard copy but international operators report digitally. The rapid acceleration of survey and clearance has generated a commensurate increase in reports to be processed by the

35 UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 14. CMAC said it employed a total of 2,100 permanent staff in 2023.

36 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023; and CMAS 20.

37 Interview with Michael Raine and Michael Heiman, APOPO, in Siem Reap, 28 May 2024.

38 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024.

39 Emails from Tony Fernandes, MAG, 31 March 2023.

40 Emails from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 15 May 2024; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 19 May 2024.

41 Emails from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 10 May 2022; and Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 15 June 2024.

42 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023.

DBU. At one point in 2023, the database unit had a backlog of 1,113 new SHAs totalling 159km² on its work bench prompting a temporary suspension of new survey so as to allow time for quality assurance (QA) checks of the backlog.⁴³

The DBU receives financial and technical support from Norway through NPA, which pays the salaries of seven of the DBU's sixteen staff, and from UNDP, which pays

the salaries of another six.⁴⁴ The CMAA did not convene the TRG on information management in 2023 but said it consulted operators bilaterally.⁴⁵ It is uncertain to what extent the CMAA has sufficient capacity to comprehensively quality manage the significant volumes of land release data generated annually, including by the military.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Cambodia's Mine Action Strategy for 2018–2025 set eight goals for clearance of mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), and other ERW. The first goal was to release all known mined areas by 2025 through planned land release of 110km² a year from 2020.⁴⁶ In 2024, Cambodia recognised it would not complete clearance by then and "retired" the target. The CMAA was reviewing a timeline for completion that would take account of survey results and the funding available.⁴⁷

Cambodia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request revised land release targets for 2019–25 in a work plan that proposed a rise in the area released from 110km² a year in 2020–21 to 146km² for the remainder of the extension period when additional deminers were projected to come on board and become operational.⁴⁸ Cambodia fell well short of those targets (see Table 4) but in 2022, Prime Minister Hun Sen pushed for completion by the end of 2025 leading the CMAA to reset its targets, aiming to release 345km² in 2023 and 168km² in each of the two remaining years.⁴⁹

A revised work plan submitted in 2023 said Cambodia would release 356km² in 2023 and 168km² in each of 2024 and 2025. It said the CMAA would coordinate clearance of mined areas located outside the 7km-wide border zone in 2023 and address the remaining mined areas on the border from late 2023 until the end of 2025.⁵⁰ The CMAA said the government planned to mobilise significant military capacity to help accelerate land release, including 910 personnel from the RCA and 805 personnel from the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and ERW Clearance (NPMEC).⁵¹

Cambodian authorities had halted clearance of the K5 mine belt on the border with Thailand in July 2020 during the COVID pandemic and since then has mostly excluded international operators from working within a 7km-wide

zone along all international borders. The CMAA said the government only allows Cambodia's military to conduct clearance in an area of up to 2km from the border but international operators are allowed and would be tasked in 2024 to conduct clearance in an area between 5 and 7km from the border. CMAC continued to have access to border areas for survey "in cooperation with" the RCA but is only authorised to clear certain specified border minefields in areas identified as development zones.⁵² No detail was immediately available on the number or location of development zones. The CMAA established a task force with the RCA in early 2023 to conduct a joint inspection of minefields in each of the border provinces to assess options for assigning operators to clear them. The RCA was expected to produce a report for CMAA recommending the next steps towards border clearance.⁵³ The CMAA said the RCA and NPMEC had been tasked to clear border areas.⁵⁴

In 2022, Cambodia embarked on a strategy of completing clearance of the remaining AP mined areas in less-heavily contaminated provinces in order to declare them mine free and concentrate resources in areas posing the biggest challenge to completion. The process started with the south-eastern province of Kep in February 2022 and by the end of the year seven provinces and Phnom Penh municipality were declared free of mines. Provinces earmarked by the CMAA for being declared mine free in 2023 included Kampong Thom, Kratie, Mondulkiiri, Rattanakiri, and Siem Reap, which, at the end of 2022, had a total of 113km² of confirmed and suspected mined areas.⁵⁵ By the end of 2023, Cambodia planned to have released all known mined areas from 18 provinces, leaving seven provinces along the border with Thailand to clear⁵⁶ but in 2024 still had mine contamination to clear outside these provinces.

43 Email from mine action operators, June–July 2024.

44 Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023; and UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 17.

45 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

46 Email from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 14 May 2021.

47 Interview with Ly Panharith, CMAA, in Phnom Penh, 23 May 2024; and email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 15 June 2024.

48 Statement of Cambodia, Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

49 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023.

50 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023.

51 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 3 May 2023.

52 Online interview with Tan Sara, Deputy Secretary General, CMAA, 11 September 2024.

53 Emails from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April and 3 May 2023; Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023.

54 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 3 May 2023.

55 Ibid.

56 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023.

Cambodia has followed both a top-down and a bottom-up approach to planning and prioritisation. The CMAA drew up a list of priority villages based on agreed criteria and national priorities while MAPUs coordinated with operators at the provincial level to develop a list of local communities' priority

clearance tasks for their annual work plans using agreed criteria.⁵⁷ The CMAA introduced a Mine Free Village policy in May 2022 designed to mobilise funding from development organisations, the private sector, and individuals to support clearance of specific villages.⁵⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Mine action is conducted according to the CMAS, which are broadly consistent with IMAS.⁵⁹ The National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) 2018–2025 emphasised the need for efficient use of resources and the CMAA has worked on developing CMAS in consultation with clearance operators.⁶⁰

CMAA data in August 2022⁶¹ showed 18 standards to have been approved and in use, although seven of these were listed as due to be updated.⁶² Cambodia became the first country to introduce a national mine action standard for gender and diversity, which the CMAA completed in December 2023 and planned to launch before the end of 2024.⁶³ The CMAA also revised the standard for baseline survey in late 2023 to strengthen its accuracy. An earlier review after the first phase of the Baseline Survey (BLS) had found that many accidents had occurred outside polygons recorded by the BLS. The revised standard clarified distinctions between survey of areas affected by mines or by CMR, putting more emphasis in mine survey on post-clearance land use and requiring reporting of newly identified hazardous areas to the CMAA's quality management (QM) team.⁶⁴

In a bid to accelerate land release, the CMAA launched a "ground data verification" project in 2020, which involved revisiting mined areas that had been surveyed to confirm whether they required clearance, had been reclaimed for agricultural use, or could be cancelled through NTS. A project implemented by NPA in 2021 visited mined areas totalling nearly 73km² and found that 25.6km² could be cancelled through NTS.⁶⁵ In 2022, NPA said it visited 90.9km² leading to the release of 12.9km², of which 12.7km² was land already reclaimed for use and the remaining 0.2km² was cancelled.⁶⁶ In 2023, NPA visited 853 mined areas covering 123.1km² and was able to cancel 28.2km² representing 23% of the surveyed area.⁶⁷

The CMAA said it operated with eight three-strong QM teams in 2023⁶⁸ and had considered increasing the number to twelve by downsizing teams to two people each.⁶⁹ QM teams had previously aimed to visit each demining team roughly once a month⁷⁰ but were challenged by the surge in operational activity in the past two years. Mine action observers also questioned the degree of access afforded to QM teams by military clearance tasks. The CMAA kept the number of teams at eight but sought to increase the number of days for field visits and was seeking additional funding to make it possible.⁷¹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine clearance in Cambodia continued to be led by national operator CMAC and two international NGOs – The HALO Trust and MAG. Smaller operators active in 2022 included APOPO, working with CMAC and MAG, and national operator Cambodian Self-help Demining (CSHD). NPA was not involved in mine clearance but operated four four-person NTS teams funded through UNDP's Clearing for Results programme, cancelling land reclaimed and used by communities.⁷²

In response to former Prime Minister Hun Sen's initiative to complete AP mine clearance by the end of 2025 the government also mobilised significant capacity from the RCA and NPMEC that was active in 2023 but which was an uncertain factor for 2024 and beyond. In April 2023, the CMAA reported the RCA had mobilised 35 platoons with a total of 910 personnel, of which 16 platoons were operational.⁷³ A revised Article 5 deadline extension request

57 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

58 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 15 June 2024.

59 Emails from Rebecca Letven, MAG, 7 April 2020; and Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 19 March 2020.

60 Emails from Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 11 September 2019; and Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 4 April 2019.

61 Email from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 5 September 2022.

62 Seven standards due for updating were: Reporting for investigation of demining incidents; Safety and occupational health (two standards); Personal Protective Equipment; Baseline survey; Land release; and Cluster munition remnant survey (CMRS).

63 Email from Kol Vireak, Head, Database Section (on behalf of the Secretary General), CMAA, 8 September 2024.

64 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 15 June 2024.

65 Email from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 26 July 2022.

66 Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

67 UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 8.

68 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024. Other mine action stakeholders reported in 2024 that the CMAA had operated with six QM teams since 2021.

69 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

70 Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 7 December 2022; "Quality Assurance and Quality Control", UNDP-CMAA Briefing Paper, 2022.

71 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

72 Email from Sron Samrithea, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 15 May 2024.

73 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

work plan submitted in May 2023 identified the RCA as providing 1,150 deminers and NPMEC 806 deminers⁷⁴ but the CMAA later reported that in 2023 RCA deployed 910 deminers and NPMEC 540.⁷⁵ The CMAA said there were no RCA deminers and only 25 NPMEC deminers operational in 2024, indicating this was due to lack of funding.⁷⁶

CMAC, Cambodia's biggest mine action operator with around 2,100 permanent staff and 3,500 volunteers, reported deploying 152 demining teams with 1,247 deminers, including 189 women, in addition to CMR and battle area clearance teams and supported by a wide range of mechanical assets and animal detection capabilities.⁷⁷ CMAC, the only one of the civilian demining operators with full access to border areas, was tasked in 2024 with—and started implementing—a survey of border areas to provide a complete overview of contamination that would allow Cambodia to set a revised timeline for completion.⁷⁸ Results of release of AP mined area in 2023 showed CMAC operating in 15 of Cambodia's 25 provinces.⁷⁹ In 2024, it planned to release around 280km².⁸⁰

The capacity of international operators in 2023 remained largely unchanged from the previous year. MAG continued with 17 demining teams working in Battambang where it employed a team of APOPO's mine detection rats, as well as in Rattanak Kiri province. MAG also sub-contracted two mine detection dogs (MDDs) from CMAC supervised by MAG team leaders but said it deployed less mechanical capacity after standing down two tillers because there were no suitable tasks for them.⁸¹ APOPO reported its rats work faster than manual teams, mostly on scattered/nuisance mine tasks, and have never missed a mine. It added a technical survey dog (TSD) team in early 2023 which was deployed in Siem Reap province's Koh Ker temple.⁸² HALO reported fielding 85 manual demining teams and working in six provinces in 2023 but remained unable to return to border sites where it had worked previously. HALO survey teams employed Trimble DA2 satellite navigation system providing a high degree of precision to map completed polygons and in 2024 started using Phantom drones to support task survey.⁸³

Table 3: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2023⁸⁴

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Animal Detection and handlers	Machines	Comments
APOPO	1	5	4 MDR teams 46 rats/36 handlers 1 TSD team 4 dogs/4 handlers	4	1 MDR team, 9 rats/10 handlers, working with MAG in Battambang. 1 MDR team (9 rats/10 handlers) in Siem Reap; 2 MDR teams (24 rats/18 handlers) in Prey Vihear with CMAC. 4 TSD dogs and 4 handlers in Prey Vihear with CMAC.
CMAC	152	1,247	14 MDD teams (24 dogs/24 handlers)	38	Also deployed 17 TS teams with 111 personnel; 2 underwater operations teams; and 14 EOD teams.
CSHD	1	12	0	0	
HALO	84	588	0	3	Also 12 NTS teams with 60 personnel
MAG	17	136	2 MDD teams, 8 dogs, 8 handlers (in partnership with CMAC)	5	Also 5 CL/NTS teams with 10 personnel
NPMEC	N/K	540	0	0	
RCA	35	910	0	0	
Totals	290	3,438	46 rats/36 handlers 24 dogs/24 handlers	50	

74 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 5.

75 Online interview with Tan Sara, CMAA, 11 September 2024.

76 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

77 Email from Phat Phearak, Director of Cabinet, CMAC, 13 August 2024; CMAC Annual Report 2023, p. 7.

78 Interviews with Ly Panharith, CMAA, 23 May 2024 and Heng Rattana, CMAC, 27 May 2024.

79 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

80 Interview with Heng Rattana, CMAC, in Phnom Penh, 27 May 2024.

81 Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

82 Emails from Michael Raine, Programme Manager Cambodia, APOPO, 2 August 2023 and 24 May 2024, and interview in Siem Reap, 28 May 2024.

83 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024 and interview in Phnom Penh, 22 May 2024.

84 Emails from Michael Raine, APOPO, 24 May 2024; Phat Phearak, CMAC, 13 August 2024; Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024; MAC Annual Report 2023, p. 7; and online interview with Tan Sara, CMAA, 11 September 2024.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

The latest available CMAA data reported release of 362km² of mined area through survey and clearance in 2023, 89% more than the previous year due to significant increases in land released through TS and clearance, but not through NTS (see Table 4) and 10% more than recorded in its Article 7 report for 2023. The CMAA also reported destruction of 19,229 AP mines, 33% more than the previous year. The 2023 total comprised 17,173 mines destroyed in the course of clearance and another 2,056 in EOD spot tasks.⁸⁵

But the reported 2023 clearance figures for the RCA and NPMEC are not feasible, when compared to clearance rates of international operators in Cambodia. It is assumed, therefore, that RCA and NPMEC clearance data must contain huge amounts of release through survey and may also include clearance of AV mined areas (rather than solely AP mined areas or mixed AP and AV mined areas). For this reason, Mine Action Review has estimated that actual mine clearance in Cambodia totals 129.7km² for 2023.

Table 4: Reported release of mined areas in 2022 and 2023 (CMAA data)

Year	Cancelled (m ²)	Reduced (m ²)	Cleared (m ²)	Total (m ²)
2023 ⁸⁶	33,178,237	135,392,938	193,364,275	361,935,450
2022 ⁸⁷	32,276,782	70,789,659	88,475,191	191,541,632
Totals	65,455,019	206,182,597	281,839,466	553,477,082

SURVEY IN 2023

NTS focused on releasing land recorded as contaminated but reclaimed for use by local communities appears to be levelling off. The CMAA reported 33km² was cancelled in 2023 (see Table 5), marginally more than the previous year and NPA's land reclamation NTS alone reportedly cancelled 28km².⁸⁸

CMAA data, as in past years, show lower levels of cancellation by international operators than they themselves report, an issue previously attributed to delays uploading operator results into the database. HALO said it cancelled 8.05km² through NTS in 2023, compared 5.44km² recorded by the CMAA, and MAG said it cancelled 2km² in Battambang compared with 0.83km² reported by the CMAA.⁸⁹

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023 (CMAA data)⁹⁰

Province	Area cancelled (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	7,989,607
Battambang	2,275,964
Kampong Thom	1,767,004
Koh Kong	932,055
Oddar Meanchey	1,305,904
Preah Vihear	17,508,414
Pursat	501,370
Rattanakiri	42,539
Siem Reap	855,380
Total	33,178,237

Mined area reduced through TS nearly doubled to 135km² in 2023, a result that compares with just 9km² that was reduced two years earlier in 2021. CMAA data attributed 129km² (95%) of the reduction total to CMAC,⁹¹ which does not cancel land through NTS on the grounds that it is not sufficiently safe and insists instead on TS.⁹² Official data were inconsistent with results reported by operators: HALO reported reducing 1.15km², 17% more than the 0.98km² recorded by the CMAA while MAG said it reduced 1.7km² in 2023, much less than the previous year but closer to 90% on the 0.92km² the CMAA attributed to it.⁹³

85 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 15 June 2024. The Article 7 report for 2023 submitted on 5 June 2024 recorded release of 321.08km² in 2023: cancellation of 31.45km², reduction of 129.04km², and clearance of 167.53km².

86 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

87 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

88 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024; and UNDP, Clearing for Results IV, 2023 Annual Project Progress Report, p. 8.

89 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

90 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

91 Ibid.

92 CMAC said it reduced 131km² in 2023, including 95km² in Kampong Speu province. Email from Phat Phearak, CMAC, 13 August 2024.

93 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2023 (CMAA data)⁹⁴

Province	Area reduced (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	4,507,303
Battambang	7,207,221
Kampong Cham	552,782
Kampong Speu	10,682,044
Kampong Thom	38,280,684
Kampot	165,823
Oddar Meanchey	535,101
Pailin	3,540,440
Preah Vihear	12,935,720
Pursat	19,781,936
Rattanakiri	520,868
Siem Reap	36,638,717
Takeo	44,299
Total	135,392,938

CLEARANCE IN 2023

Cambodia's reported mine clearance results in 2022 set a new record by releasing 88.5km² and in 2023 it repeated that achievement, reporting release of an astonishing 193km², an increase of 118% (see Table 7). As noted above, however, the reported clearance figures for the RCA and NPMEC are not feasible and are therefore assumed to contain huge amounts of release through survey and may also include clearance of AV mined areas (rather than solely AP mined areas or mixed AP and AV mined areas). Mine Action Review has estimated that RCA and NPMEC's combined efforts, all of which is reported by the CMAA to be in the form of manual demining, can most likely have amounted to no more than 13km² in 2023⁹⁵ instead of the 76.66km² reported (see Table 8). This gives a total clearance figure for Cambodia of 129.7km² and is the estimated clearance total Mine Action Review has used for Cambodia for 2023.

Cambodia's approach has been to focus clearance on mined areas outside the 7km border zone pending re-survey of border minefields and agreement on how to proceed with clearance, and the rapid acceleration in clearance in 2023 was facilitated by the light level of mine contamination addressed in these non-border areas. But almost 30km² of reported clearance in Banteay Meanchey province achieved the destruction of only 865 AP mines while 17.5km² of clearance in Kratie province destroyed only 61 AP mines.

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2023 (CMAA data)⁹⁶

Province	Area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Banteay Meanchey	29,237,265	865
Battambang	20,322,792	2,683
Kampong Speu	10,361,018	632
Kampong Thom	7,947,792	2,530
Kampot	12,388	15
Koh Kong	4,169,455	34

⁹⁴ Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

⁹⁵ This is on the basis of 1,450 deminers, each working for 300 days in 2023 and clearing, on average, 30m² a day.

⁹⁶ Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

Table 7 Continued

Province	Area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Kratie	17,484,343	61
Mondulkiri	8,399,270	69
Oddar Meanchey	22,514,010	2,209
Pailin	1,194,762	397
Preah Vihear	28,119,891	2,421
Pursat	20,699,835	2,627
Rattanakiri	79,649	13
Siem Reap	22,821,805	2,617
Totals	193,364,275	17,173

Based on CMAA data, most of the cleared areas consisted of scattered/nuisance mines (62%) or a scattered mixture of AP and AV mines (32%). Densely mined areas accounted for 1.5% of the total.⁹⁷ HALO, which had worked on the densely-mined K5 border mine belt up to 2020 and has since applied without success to return to it, cleared 87,049m² of dense minefield out of total clearance of 7.68km² in 2023, according to HALO's own data.⁹⁸

CMAC alone accounted for more than half the total area cleared in 2023,⁹⁹ according to CMAA data (see Table 8). In

addition to this, the RCA and NPMEC, which had little part in mine action in Cambodia in 2022, are together credited with clearing 40% of the area released in 2023.¹⁰⁰ Given the lack of demining machines and MDDs, the figures provided are not consistent with the work of 1,450 manual deminers and as previously mentioned, Mine Action Review has therefore estimated RCA and NPMEC's combined clearance output for 2023 at 13km². The output officially attributed to HALO and MAG, totalling 12.36km², exceeded their own reported combined clearance total of 10.7km².¹⁰¹

Table 8: Mine clearance by operator in 2023 (CMAA data)¹⁰²

Operator	Region	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
CMAC	Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Kratie, Mondulkiri, Oddar Meanchey, Prey Vihear, Pailin, Pursat, Rattanak Kiri, Siem Reap	104,205,408	13,859
RCA	Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Speu, Oddar Meanchey	46,705,170	2,434
NPMEC	Koh Kong, Kratie, Mondulkiri	29,955,868	164
HALO	Banteay Meanchey, Battambang Oddar Meanchey, Pailin, Prey Vihear, Pursat, Siem Reap	9,697,019	369
MAG	Battambang	2,667,838	319
CSHD	Siem Reap	132,972	28
Totals		193,364,275	17,173

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024.

⁹⁹ CMAC reported clearing 107.9km² in 2023. Email from Phat Phearak, CMAC, 13 August 2024.

¹⁰⁰ Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

¹⁰¹ HALO recorded a lower clearance result of 7,684,829m² in 2023 and MAG a larger result of 3,015,769m². Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 8 July 2024; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 24 June 2024.

¹⁰² Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the second extension of 5 years and 11 months, granted by States Parties in 2019), Cambodia was required to destroy all AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. Despite the land release achievements produced by former Prime Minister Hun Sen's drive to mobilise the necessary funding and push for completion, Cambodia "retired" the goal in 2024 and said it will submit a deadline extension request in March 2025.¹⁰³

The amount of additional time Cambodia will request will only be determined after completing a new survey in 21 districts along its 800km-long border with Thailand – a survey the government has tasked CMAC to conduct in collaboration with the RCA. Cambodia told the intersessional meetings in June 2024 the survey would start the following month and the survey was expected to be completed by the end of the year. Cambodia also drew attention to two other critical factors that will determine the pace of future progress: funding and the need for agreement with Thailand on border clearance.¹⁰⁴

Cambodia says it needs \$132 million to complete clearance of 515km² of projected remaining mine contamination¹⁰⁵ but the funding that made 2023's acceleration possible does not appear to be sustainable. Former Prime Minister Hun Sen had announced in 2022 that the government would allocate \$30 million to mine action in 2023 and "similar payments" in 2024 and 2025 as well as \$18.6 million raised in 2022 from private contributions.¹⁰⁶ The additional resources enabled deployment of RCA and NPMEC deminers who reportedly accounted for 40% of land cleared in 2023 (according to CMAA data), and government funding for CMAC and the military was expected to support 68% of planned clearance in 2024.¹⁰⁷ Some of that funding was carried over to support

operations by CMAC and a small NPMEC unit in 2024 but the government did not provide additional funding in 2024 and RCA demining operations have not continued.¹⁰⁸ The shortfall underscores a key uncertainty over Cambodia's plans for clearance and particularly for clearance of the border, which is earmarked for national operators, notably CMAC, the RCA, and NPMEC.

Cambodia's armed forces, meanwhile, are under scrutiny over the failure to reach agreement with Thailand on terms for clearance of minefields in disputed areas of their common border, an issue that is also holding back Thailand's progress to completion. The prime ministers of Cambodia and Thailand agreed in 2022 that clearance could proceed in disputed areas without waiting for resolution of their border demarcation dispute. The Thai Mine Action Centre (TMAC) reported that Cambodian troops intervened to halt clearance by TMAC on tasks close to the border on five occasions in 2023¹⁰⁹ and have intervened again in 2024.

In October 2022, TMAC submitted a list and detailed coordinates of 10 border tasks that both sides have previously inspected and hoped agreement could be reached to proceed on at least two of them before the Fifth Review Conference to be hosted by Cambodia in Siem Reap at the end of November 2024.¹¹⁰ TMAC and CMAC reported constructive discussions in 2023 and Thai and Cambodian ministers of defence meeting under the auspices of the two countries' General Border Committee agreed that CMAC and TMAC should establish a framework for border clearance.¹¹¹ CMAC's director reported in May 2024 that he was drafting SOPs for border operations.¹¹² As of September 2024, the two sides had still not reached an agreement to proceed.

103 Interview with Ly Panharith, CMAA, in Phnom Penh, 23 May 2024; Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

104 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

105 Ibid.

106 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

107 Second Updated Work Plan, Cambodia, CMAA, 30 April 2024.

108 Email from Hean Kimsin, CMAA, 23 August 2024.

109 Email from TMAC, 21 August 2024.

110 Interview with General Nattawut Sabyeroop, Director General, TMAC, in Bangkok, 29 May 2024.

111 Interviews with CMAC, in Phnom Penh, 27 May 2024; and General Nattawut Sabyeroop, TMAC, in Bangkok, 29 May 2024.

112 Interview with Heng Rattana, CMAC, in Phnom Penh, 27 May 2024.

Table 9: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance¹¹³

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	*129.70
2022	88.48
2021	43.73
2020	49.99
2019	**45.62
Total	357.52

*Mine Action Review estimate ** May include significant AV mine clearance

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

Goal 7 of Cambodia's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 calls for establishing sustainable national capacity to address residual threats after completion. The policy adopted in 2022 of declaring provinces mine free has underscored the need for clarifying Cambodia's approach for tackling residual contamination. Additional information provided to Cambodia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request said that by 2025 Cambodia would have the necessary legal, institutional, and operational framework in place for dealing with residual risks. The request said "it is likely the Royal Cambodian Army will be the national capacity [that] remains to address the residual threats."¹¹⁴

The CMAA partnered with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in a report making 10 recommendations on the legal, normative, structural, and procedural issues to be addressed in setting up residual risk management capacity.¹¹⁵ The CMAA said it is developing a National Mine Action Policy 2026–35 which will provide for managing residual mine contamination¹¹⁶ but in 2024 was still developing a policy on how and when to transition from a pro-active mine action programme to residual clearance.¹¹⁷

113 In September 2024, the CMAA provided different figures for AP mine clearance in 2019–21: 2021: 74.90km²; 2020: 60.13km²; and 2019: 35.44km². Email from Kol Vireak (on behalf of the Secretary General), CMAA, 8 September 2024.

114 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, 8 August 2019, p. 5.

115 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 18.

116 Email from Kol Vireak (on behalf of the Secretary General), CMAA, 8 September 2024.

117 Interview with Ly Panharith, CMAA, in Phnom Penh, 23 May 2024.